

AMENDMENT TO THE DRAWINGS

Attached are replacement drawing sheets, each marked in the top margin with the indicia "Replacement Sheet" in accordance with the requirements under 37 C.F.R. § 1.84. To address the Examiner's objection to the drawings beginning on Page 3 of the Office Action, Applicant submits herewith the aforementioned replacement drawings sheets.

No new matter has been introduced by submitting the replacement drawing sheets.

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action dated September 15, 2005, on which the shortened period for response expires on December 15, 2005. Accordingly, this response is timely filed.

Summary of Office Action

Applicant's claims 1-12 are currently pending in the above-identified patent application. Claim 13 has been withdrawn from consideration.

Claims 1-4 and 7-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,066,903 (hereinafter "Ichiyama"). Claims 5, 6, 11 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ichiyama in view of U.S. Patent 6,375,357 (hereinafter "Miura"). The declaration was found defective. The specification and drawings were objected to due to informalities.

Applicant's Reply to Defective Declaration

The declaration was found defective due to the omission of a post office address. Applicant submits herewith a newly executed supplemental declaration to address the aforementioned defect identified in the originally filed declaration.

Applicant's Reply to Objection of the Specification and Drawings

The specification and drawings were objected to due to various informalities identified by the Examiner on pages 3-5 of the Office Action. Applicant has addressed the objections to the specification and drawings, respectively, on pages 6 and 7 of this paper.

Applicant's Reply to Restriction of the Claims

Claims 1-12 and Claim 13 were identified as distinct inventions and, therefore, a restriction was required under 35 U.S.C. § 121. A provisional election was made without traverse to prosecute the invention of a hydrodynamic bearing system, identified by Claims 1-12. Applicant affirms the aforementioned election.

Applicant's Reply to Rejection of the Claims

The Examiner rejected independent claims 1-4 and 7-10 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Ichiyama. The Examiner also rejected dependent claims 5, 6, 11, and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ichiyama in view of Miura. Applicant has proposed amending the claims, as reflected under the heading Listing of Claims beginning on page 2 of this paper, to better distinguish the claimed invention. In addition, Applicant submits the following remarks wherein the Examiner's rejections are respectfully traversed.

In rejecting Applicant's independent claims 1 and 7, the Examiner asserts that all of the elements provided in these independent claims are shown in Ichiyama. *Office Action, Pages 5-6*. However, Applicant respectfully submits that Ichiyama fails to show the limitation of a shield secured to an end face of the bearing sleeve having a recessed portion between its outer cylindrical surface and its inner cylindrical surface, as provided in Applicant's amended independent claims 1 and 7.

Although it appears from Figure 2 of Ichiyama that the top of the shield (i.e., seal member 22) is flush with the top end surface of the bearing sleeve (i.e., rotary sleeve 18), the shield is not secured in a recessed portion provided along the end face of the bearing sleeve. Rather the shield in Ichiyama is secured against the inner cylindrical bore surface of the bearing sleeve and top surface of rotary thrust plate 18b. Ichiyama does not teach utilizing a recessed portion at the end face of the bearing sleeve to secure a shield.

Moreover, by providing a recessed portion at the end face of the bearing sleeve as in Applicant's claimed invention, the inner cylindrical surface of the bearing sleeve forms as a wall between the recessed portion where the shield is secured and the bearing gap acting as a reservoir for the lubricating oil. This limitation is clearly not taught in Ichiyama. Rotary thrust plate 18 of Ichiyama, as identified by the Examiner, provides a barrier between the shield and the lubricating oil. However, the rotary thrust plate is separate from the bearing sleeve. Unlike Applicant's claimed invention, the end surface of the bearing sleeve in Ichiyama is not provided with a recess thereby allowing the inner cylindrical surface of the bearing sleeve to act as a wall and protect the shield from exposure to the lubricating oil.

Claims 5-6 and 11-12 depend, respectively, from independent claims 1 and 7 and, therefore, necessarily include all of their limitations. The deficiency in Ichiyama, as discussed above with respect to amended independent claims 1 and 7, applies with equal force to the

rejection of these dependent claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Accordingly, claims 5, 6, 11 and 12 are patentable over Ichiyama in view of Miura.

Conclusion

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that the claimed invention as defined by amended independent claim 1, claims 2 -6 which depend therefrom, and independent claim 7, claims 8-12 which depend therefrom, are patentable over the cited references.

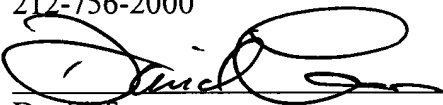
For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicant respectfully submits that this patent application, as amended, is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and prompt allowance of this application are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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By:



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